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SUBJECT: EUFOR: MANDATE TO END NOVEMBER 30

REF: KINSHASA 1523

Classified By: PolCouns DBrown, reasons 1.4 b,d.

¶1. (C) Summary. Senior EU Force (EUFOR) commanders in Kinshasa say that EUFOR intends to leave the DRC as scheduled November 30. They think they are doing the job they were sent to do, and doing it well. End summary.

¶2. (C) EUFOR Commander and Major General Christian Damay and chief of staff Colonel Eric Guyon told us in separate meetings September 27 they believe EUFOR will accomplish its mission in DR Congo, and there will be no need to renew its mandate past November 30. Damay said he considers that EUFOR's mission has been positive and has contributed to the country's security and the success of the electoral process. He expressed concern that many Congolese are still suspicious of people in uniform, and believe EUFOR was sent to ensure a Kabila victory or will remain in place to install a neocolonialist regime.

¶3. (C) Guyon emphasized that EUFOR was brought in to secure the Congolese electoral process, and that process ends with the second round of elections. He stated that the EUFOR mission has been a success, and that all objectives in the field have been met.

¶4. (C) Both expressed confidence in MONUC and Congolese forces currently in place. Damay stated these troops would be sufficient to ensure adequate security in the months ahead. Guyon conceded that a great deal is unknown about how events will unfold between now and election day on October 29, but believes EUFOR and MONUC will be able to handle any problems. He said EUFOR now has small teams in place to support MONUC in Lubumbashi, Mbuji-Mayi, Kananga and Mbandaka, in addition to its Kinshasa contingent. These units are set up more as a show of force to intimidate any possible spoilers, and do not have much operational capacity.

¶5. (C) Damay expressed doubt about the intentions of the Kabila and Bemba camps regarding the Kinshasa arms-free agreement (reftel), and their willingness to resort once more to violence. He said he believed both sides were making good efforts, while noting that it is impossible to know what they may be hiding. Guyon described the joint verification teams set up after the August 20-22 shootout as "an empty shell." He said neither side is currently doing much in terms of arms verification and reduction. However, neither is willing to abandon the mechanism altogether because of the political cover and value it conveys. (Note: The first joint patrols of the Congolese police with MONUC and EUFOR troops began October 3, aimed at enforcing a weapons ban in Kinshasa during the election period. End note.)

¶6. (C) Guyon admitted to some concerns about the gap between the end of EUFOR's mandate on November 30 and the scheduled December 10 presidential inauguration. He said that there could certainly be some violence instigated by the losing party to disturb the post-election period.

¶7. (C) Comment. Useful activities of EUFOR in support of MONUC notwithstanding, its mission statement remains a moving target. Drawing a firm line under November is likely driven as much by political considerations in Europe, especially in Germany, as anything else. However, it begs the question of whether conditions on the ground will -- or will not -- warrant a continued EUFOR presence, particularly until installation of the new government on December 10. End comment.

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